

USSR furnishes Albanian military forces with technicians, troops, destroyers & assists in rebuilding Albanian armed forces and establishes Soviet controlled air & naval bases in Albania as well as underground submarine pens & fuel depots. Goal of Soviets is to control all the European military forces which are along the shores of N. Africa, in the middle N. Atlantic region & in W. Europe.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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report on the Albanian Air and

Naval bases and on Soviet activity in the Albanian Air Force, Army
and Navy.

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ATTACHMENT

1. Steep and mountainous Albania has become a "Red Gibraltar" in the middle of the Mediterranean. Since the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the Cominform, Albania has been accorded great importance by the USSR. The USSR has armed Albania with the most modern weapons and has established submarine bases and missile sites in Albania.

2. Soviet engineers and technicians have worked for years in Albania and have completely modernized the Soviet bases which have been established in Albania. The Soviets control seven air bases and five submarine bases in Albania.

a. Air Bases—The Air bases are located at Binas (near Tirana), Devoli, and Diranova in the vicinity of Berat, Ergiri (Gjinokaster), Delvino, Avlonya (Vlone), and Ismi (a village near Tirana).

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b. Naval Bases—There are four naval bases in the vicinity of Avlonya. One of these bases is located on Cape Linguetta on the northwest side of the Bay of Avlonya. The second is at the head of the bay, the third is in Avlonya, and the fourth is on Saseno (Sazan) Island. The fifth base is located

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south of Avlonya. It is believed that the Soviet submarines are distributed among these five bases.

3. Underground (submarine) Pens

a. Saseno Island was given to Albania after World War II. The Soviets, who understood the strategic importance of Saseno Island, began constructing large establishments here. The Soviet strategy has been to use submarines in large numbers, and underground pens have been constructed for their submarines on Saseno Island. Twelve underground pens have been constructed, and after the Suez crisis, it was decided to build five more pens. Much effort is being expended to finish these pens. On the completion of these pens, Saseno Island will be a "Red Gibraltar." Underground fuel depots have been constructed in four different places. Approximately twelve submarines

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are based here. The last three of the submarines came to Saseno Island at the time of the visit of a Soviet fleet to the Adriatic [REDACTED]

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b. The bottom (presumably the southern end) of Saseno Island is used as a submarine base by the Soviets and (here) submarine pens, tunnels which have been hollowed out and perfected, are being used. There exist on Saseno Island tunnels and hiding places in which up to 100 submarines can be hidden. Saseno Island is fortified with mobile long range artillery mounted on rails. No civilians are allowed on Saseno Island, and the island is tightly controlled by the Soviets. Shipping must not pass close by Saseno Island. Oil which is produced in Kircova (sic) is transported to Avlonya via a pipe line. A petroleum refinery has been constructed in Avlonya. This refinery is underground. Oil transported to Saseno Island via underground pipe line from Avlonya. The mountains around Avlonya are "filled" with the latest model Soviet anti-aircraft batteries. The Soviets have gradually built up the provisions and supplies on Saseno Island.

4. Target: The Sixth Fleet

a. The main target of the submarines based on Saseno Island is the Sixth Fleet and its supply ships. Six submarines from the twelve based in Saseno Island continuously "tail" the Sixth Fleet and its supply ships. These submarines which are "W" class have a range of 5,000 miles without refueling or reprovisioning. Thus, these submarines can cruise to the African or Aegean shores of the Mediterranean Sea, stay in the area for a period, and then return to their bases without refueling or reprovisioning.

b. The Soviets are able to send disassembled "W" class submarines aboard Soviet freights from the USSR to Avlonya, where they are assembled.

c. The Soviets sent three big and small floating drydocks to Avlonya [REDACTED] More than 400 Albanians worked with the Soviet experts and technicians in assembling the Soviet "W" class submarines.

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d. Within the past few years, it has been observed that some submarines are being constructed under strict secrecy in the navy base in Avlonya. It is understood that there are more than 200 submarines distributed between the navy bases, and that the majority of these are hidden in the tunnels and cave submarine pens on Saseno Island. (The presence of the 200 submarines mentioned here obviously conflicts with the twelve submarines mentioned in paragraph 2/a.)

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5. Soviet Air Forces

a. The Soviets have at least six air bases in Albania, and at least seventy-five MIG 21s in Albania. The seventh Soviet air force base is being constructed in Ismi, between Tiran (Tirana) and Drac (Durrës). It is believed that the 4,000 Soviets who are stationed at these bases and in their vicinity are supplied partially by large air transport craft and partially by freighters from Burgaz and Constanta.

b. It is said that MIG 21 aircraft make a continuous twenty-four-hour patrol called the "Otranto Patrol." Two aircraft together from a group of twelve aircraft are in the air constantly, and by this means the Soviets maintain twenty-four-hour air security. These aircraft concentrate their patrol activity along the coast of Albania and against known air and sea targets.

c. The Soviets have finished the installations for two new type ballistic missiles which they have sent to Tiran, and they have finished the foundations of the installations for a third ballistic missile. These launchers are for medium range missiles (2,850 Km). The launching pads which are located in the mountains in the vicinity of Tiran are guarded very closely, and their existence is a most closely guarded secret.

d. The Soviets have started to equip the Albanian army with modern weapons. The Albanian army is composed of three composite divisions, and recently the number of MIG 19 aircraft assigned to the Albanians has been increased to a total of one hundred.

6. Albanian Navy

a. The Albanian Navy has been strengthened by the addition of two destroyers which were received from the USSR. The Soviet personnel on these destroyers has not been replaced for the present. The Soviets have promised to hand over three additional destroyers to the Albanians.

b. Soviet fishing ships equipped with radars and electronic antennas which carry Soviet "engineers" are making hydrographic soundings and observations in various places in the Mediterranean. At the same time these fishing ships are patrolling the shores of the Mediterranean and following the Sixth Fleet. The fishing ships are giving a great deal of attention to following and observing the Sixth Fleet, and they are doing much secret work outside of chart correcting.

c. The Soviets are reinforcing the Albanian Army (65,000 men) with the latest heavy weapons and with military electronic equipment. A great amount of activity is being undertaken by the Soviet military mission, the Soviet technicians, and the Soviet engineers.

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7. The goal of the Soviets and the reason that they are expending all these efforts in Albania is to be able to control all the European military forces which are along the shores of North Africa, in the middle North Atlantic region, and in Western Europe.

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